

## ROUTINE IN GARDENS

### PREPARING FOR WINTER

FROM A CORRESPONDENT

Though plants will linger on till winter comes, as long as autumn lasts, the garden year is over and the time for cleaning the garden has come. With fewer hands to help them and with the insistent call for more vegetable growing, owners of flower gardens have no easy course to pursue.

For the moment the dead leaves come first, but whether they are swept up as they fall or after the trees are bare will depend on the available labour. Just now the tidiest of gardeners should turn them all to account, not on the bonfire or the incinerator, as in the suburbs, but heaped up, preferably in a shallow pit, such as anyone can dig, the depth being increased by a banking up of the excavated soil round the edge. As the pile accumulates foot by foot a light sprinkling of sulphate of ammonia, to be bought from any garden sundriesman, will hasten decay and turn the mass into something more valuable than leafmould.

The removal of the dead stems of herbaceous plants is regularly practised by many tidy gardeners; and where they are tall and at the mercy of the winds they may be cut down; but they are Nature's protection against the rigours of the winter, and where the hardiness of plants is in doubt they may be tied and left. As William Robinson taught his generation, there is a quiet beauty in the dead stems and seed vessels of *Lilium giganteum* and other lilies, *Ostrowskya*, the opium poppy, golden rod, and many other plants. The removal of rotten flag iris leaves and those of primroses and other broad-leaved plants generally does not take long and is well worth while. So is the protection under glass, before winter sets in, of precious mountain plants; but probably it will be possible only here and there to give Alpine plant gardens the many little personal attentions that they appreciate.

The breaking up and replanting of old clumps of herbaceous plants like the border phlox, *Erigeron*, *Campanula*, aconite, and the rest, may give place to more vital work. The winter care of lawns can be left till better times; provided that fallen leaves are gathered up, a rest does the turf no harm. On heavy soils where worms are active, and time allows, an occasional brushing of their casts will help.

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FROM A CORRESPONDENT.

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